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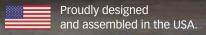
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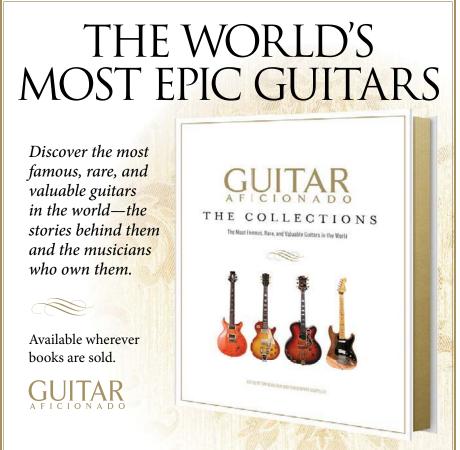


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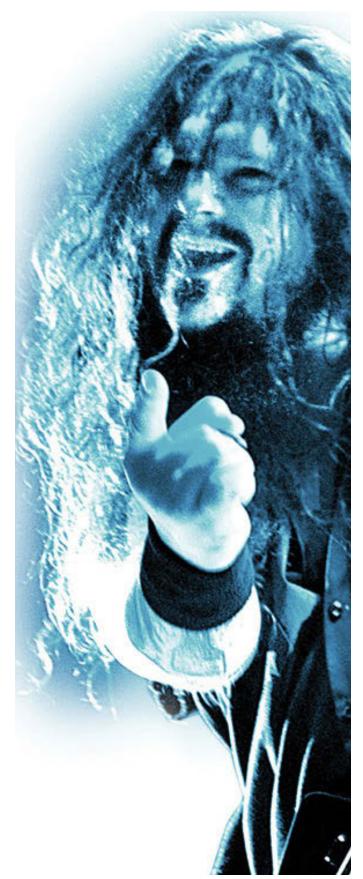








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FROM THE VAULT

Dimebag Darrell

A heavy tribute to one of the baddest metalers ever who was taken from us way too soon (from the February 2005 issue of Guitar Player).

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Alex Lifeson

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SESSIONS

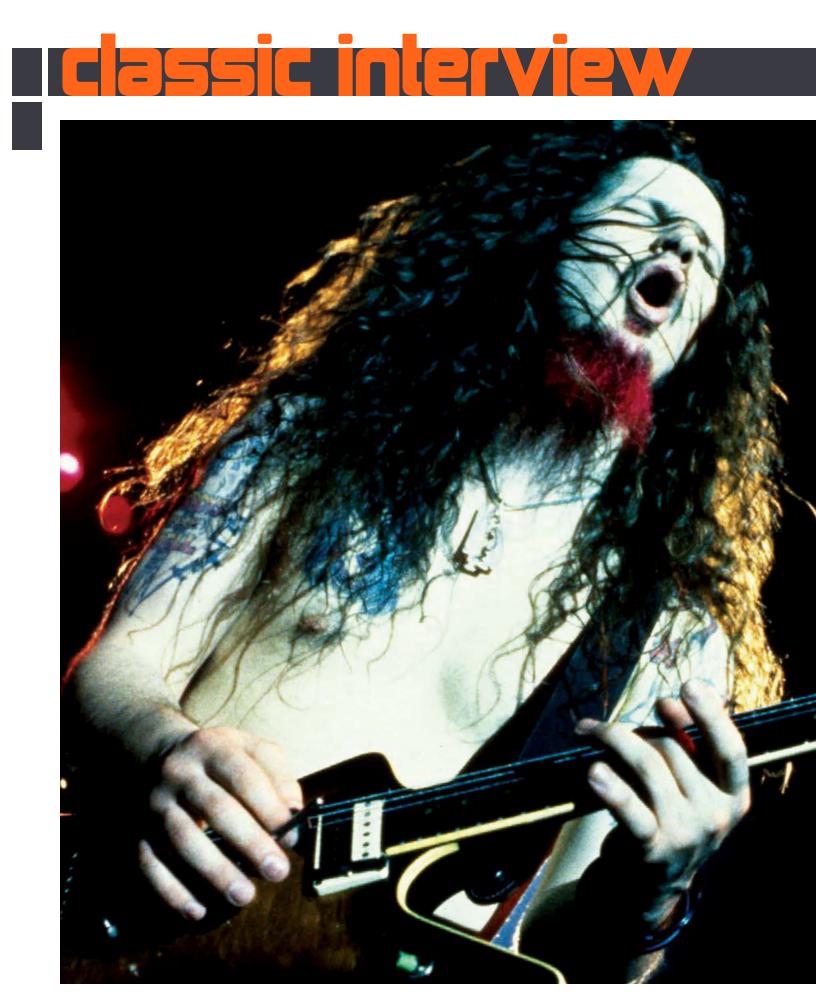
The ever-popular **TrueFire Lessons** 58

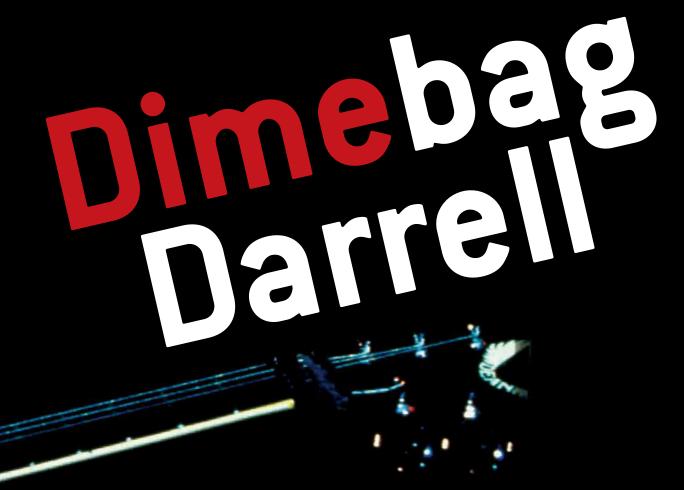
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Requiem for a Heavyweight

In my experience, early morning phone calls are rarely filled with good news. The call I received at 7:00 AM on December 9th did nothing to change that perception. The voice on the other end of the line was, somewhat breathlessly, relating to me a report he had just heard on the radio.

Cassic niervew february 2005

"To see him playing every night of the tour was amazing and inspiring. Dime was one of the best humans I've ever met. He was a true friend, and I'm going to miss him terribly."

> -Matt Bachard of Shadows Fall, who just finished a leg of the Damageplan tour.

"Dude, they're saying that a guitarist named Darrell Abbott was shot and killed last night-isn't that Dimebag?" I knew it was. What I didn't know at the time, however, were the horrific circumstances of the tragedy.

Shortly after 10:00 PM, Dimebag and his new band, Damageplan, had just taken the stage at the Alrosa Villa nightclub in Columbus, Ohio. Barely a minute into their set, 25-year old Nathan Gale made his way onto the stage and shot Dimebag at point blank range several times with a semiautomatic handgun. Damageplan's head of security, Jeff "Mayhem" Thompson, club employee Erik Halk, and fan Nathan Bray were also killed before police officer James Niggemeyer arrived on the scene and shot Gale dead. Damageplan tour manager Chris Paluska and drum tech John "Kat" Brooks were also shot by Gale, but survived.

The senselessness of the whole damn thing simply boggles the mind. Innocent people at a concert, guys onstage doing their job, murdered. It seems that just when

you're lulled into a sense that maybe mankind isn't all that bad, another unthinkable act of violence slaps and shakes you as if to say, "Wake up, man. The unthinkable is very possible." And although it feels trivial to talk about heavy metal guitar when people just like you and me lost their sons, brothers, and best friends that Wednesday night, one of those brothers was also a hell of a guitar player.

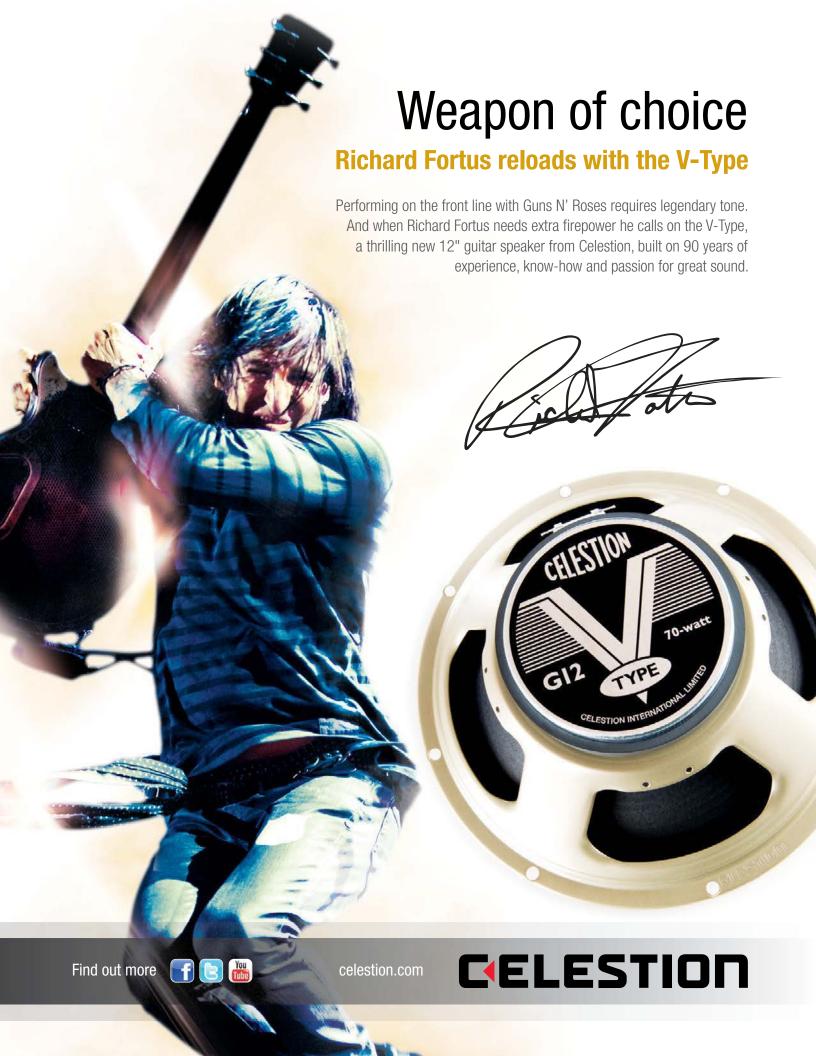
In losing Dimebag Darrell, the guitar has lost one if it's greatest advocates. The pure joy and excitement that Darrell exhibited when talking anything guitar was infectious. You got the sense that he loved the guitar as much or more at the age of 38 than he did when he was a 14-year-old punk kid, weaning himself on a steady diet of Kiss and Randy Rhoads.

Guitarist/singer Ricky Lynn Gregg knew Darrell as a teenager, when the youngster would accompany his father to Pantego Sound Studio in Pantego, Texas. Darrell, along with his brother and lifelong musical compatriot Vinnie, would hang

CONTINUES ON PAGE 15



Fans paid their respects to Dimebag outside the Alrosa Villa with a makeshift memorial.







"Nobody is better than anybody," said Darrell. "The guitar is for everyone and it's a beautiful thing. Long live the 6-string!"

Pantera-era Dimebagin 1994 [above and left], '92 [right], and at New York City's Cat Club, March 1990 [below].



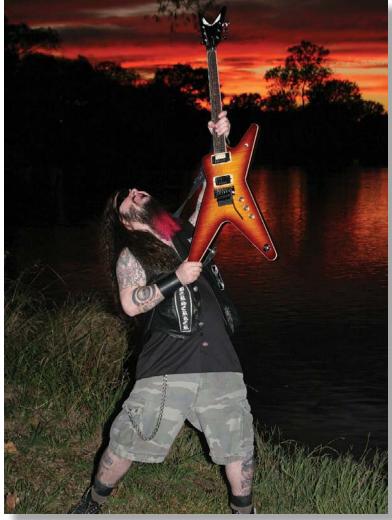


"I admired Darrell's innovative guitar playing so much that I was eager to hire him. We almost joined forces in what would have been a devastating Megadeth lineup, but Darrell would only come as a team with his brother on drums, which I respected, and I had already hired Nick Menza. Vaya con dios, Darrell." -Dave Mustaine



Dimebag relaxing with a (gasp!) acoustic [above], and shooting the breeze with his soulmate in shred, Zakk Wylde [right].









ssic interview

THRASH OF THE TITAN

DIMEBAG'S IMMORTAL RIFFAGE

It's press time here at GP headquarters, and though it's been days since Dimebag Darrell's last lick was so horrifically silenced, it still feels utterly surreal to refer to the guitarist in the past tense. But while we journalists are now obliged to write about who Darrell was, nothing demonstrates who the guitarist is and will always be to fans of heavy music better than his transcendent thrash riffs. His wild contributions to metal are as unkillable as his roaring spirit.

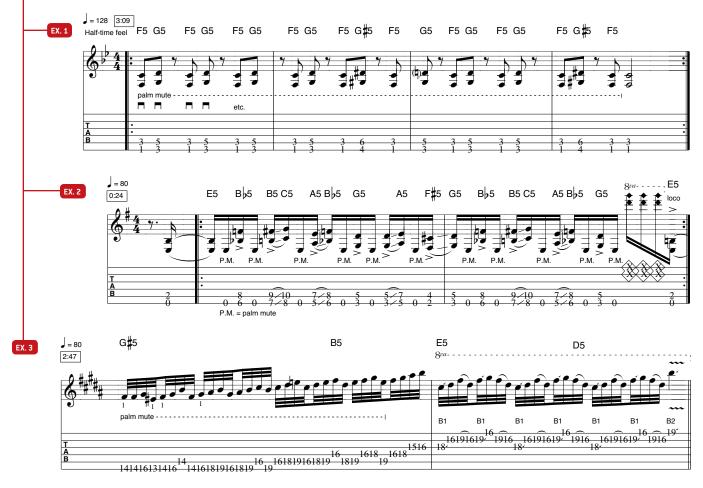
Like some great guitarists, Darrell could play very fast. But more importantly, like every great guitarist, he could also play slowly. Though he was an expert at rapid-fire head-banging riffs, Darrell also knew the value of contrast, as he proved with Ex. 1, the molasses-slow

interlude on Pantera's "This Love" (from Vulgar Display of Power). Here, the band downshifts several gears and Darrell plays power fifths with a brutal three-againstfour rhythmic feel, forcing the mosh pit into slow motion. (The exact time it occurs in the track is shown above the first bar.) This satisfying lick crushes bones at the speed of a steamroller.

As unlikely as it might seem to those who cower at the sound of monstrous metal guitar, there was always a refineddare we say it, sensitive—approach to all of Darrell's guitar parts. That's because as merciless as his licks came across, they were all played with great dynamics. Highly skilled at accenting certain pulses in a riff and muting others with his picking-hand palm, his guitar parts were

as three-dimensional as a punch in the chest. Ex. 2, taken from "Mouth for War" (from Vulgar Display of Power) is a perfect illustration of Darrell's artful string muting. The lick repeats after harmonics are struck three times on the highest pair of strings.

We close with Ex. 3, the climactic finale to Darrell's soaring solo on the same song. As stunning as this fiery ascent sounds, the line is beautifully simple. Settling into the sixteenth position on beat two of bar 1, Darrell blazes up the G# Aeolian scale, concluding with blistering blues bends in bar 2. Play it with a fraction of the passion and emotional release that Darrell did, and his radiant spirit will fill the room. —Jude Gold 🚹



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out and jam while their father worked as an engineer. "We'd all sit around and play the guitar together, and it was clear even then that Darrell was what we all termed, 'a maniac virtuoso,'" says Gregg. "I'll never forget the time when myself, Dean Zelinsky of Dean guitars, a local DJ, and other Texas musicians like Bugs Henderson were judging a guitar playing contest back in Arlington in 1981. Darrell was 14, competing against guys who were in their 20s and 30s. And he easily won the contest hands down by doing stuff that we couldn't even touch. When I heard the news that he was murdered, all I could think about was this snot-nosed kid who used to call himself Diamond Darrell. It's just so sad."

A NEW LEVEL

The brothers Abbott formed Pantera in the early 1980s. The group eventually grew to be one of the most influential metal groups ever, equaled only by Metallica and Slayer.

In fact, Pantera's 1994 release, Far Beyond Driven, shot straight to number one upon its release—a remarkable feat for an album of such unbridled intensity and heaviness. But before recording their 1990 milestone, Cowboys From Hell, Pantera had released four albums that placed the Texas quartet squarely in the hair metal camp.

"I used to go see Darrell and Pantera a lot in the late '80s, when they were still a more mainstream band," says fellow Texan and GP Metal Guru, Rusty Cooley. "I wouldn't say they were glam, but they were definitely wearing spandex and teasing their hair. Someone had told me that the guitarist did this big Randy Rhoads tribute, and when I finally saw him do it in person it was great! Darrell had this huge 'fro of wavy '80s hair, and he's up there doing an instrumental tribute to Randy Rhoads in the middle of the band's set, playing a medley of solos and riffs from those Ozzy records.

"Then, Pantera suddenly just changed

their whole sound," continues Cooley. "They got much heavier. They were playing at this club in Houston one night in, I think, 1989 and were doing all these heavy songs-even including a couple of Metallica covers—and the club owner flipped. He kicked them out, and never let them play there again. I didn't hear much about Pantera for a while after that, and then Cowboys From Hell came out and it was all over. It was heavier than heavy." Cowboys From Hell was such a watershed record for Pantera that most fans consider it to be their first album. The record contained all of the essential ingredients that would turn Darrell into a global guitar hero: demonic riffing, wild-ass shred solos, and a guitar sound that was instantly identifiable with its dense, extreme, in-your-face quality.

IF IT AIN'T JAMMIN'...

Darrell's solo style was a melting pot of modern metal and shred techniques and



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classic interview

"Darrell was perhaps the tightest, most precise metal player I ever heard. His enormous talent and personality were always genuine. All of us on the G3 tour are sickened by this tragic event."

-Joe Satriani

old-school appointments. As with Eddie Van Halen's most inspired soloing moments, Darrell's leads had a sense of child-like wonderment and discovery. You could almost hear him laughing as he surprised even himself. He would routinely break up spiraling chromatic phrases with wild, banshee-like, two-step bends, and his lead excursions often suffered brutal whammy-bar abuse. And of all the metal players to come along over the past 30 years, Darrell had one of the most wicked and wide finger vibratos going, harkening back to Randy Rhoads, and even Leslie West. "He could effortlessly go from tasty, pentatonic-based, bluesy stuff to fast intervallic lines," says Cooley. "And he made expert use of the whammy bar."

Even with wicked chops in tow, Darrell's playing was miles removed from clinical, as he often kept first takes. "Sometimes you just can't outdo the energy and feel you had on the first take," he told GP in 2000. "That's how the lead

tracks on 'Revolution Is My Name' [from the album Reinventing the Steel] came about. I did a quick scratch solo off the cuff and decided to come back later, double it, and see how it sounded. Well, when I listened to it the next morning, I loved it so much that I didn't want to redo it!" Sometimes Darrell would double only small sections of a solo. The track "Rise" from 1992's Vulgar Display of Power, finds him harmonizing small sections of whammy bar-buggery, resulting in one of his sickest solos ever.

CAN'T GET ENOUGH CHUNK

Darrell made big-time contributions to the canon of metal riffs during his 38 years on earth. Tunes such as "I'm Broken," "Mouth For War," and "Walk" are only three examples, but every record from Cowboys onward provides essential study for anyone interested in the art of the almighty riff. Punishingly fast and precise, or slow and dirgy, Darrell played





it as if his purple (or pink) billy goat beard were on fire. "Not to take anything away from his lead playing, because it was amazing," says Cooley, "but Dime's writing and rhythm playing were absolutely phenomenal. Every rhythm part was like a jackhammer, and he had a huge impact on my riff writing. In fact, he inspired me to go out and buy a noise gate, because that's the only way to get those fast, dead quiet rhythmic stops between notes that you hear on those Pantera records."

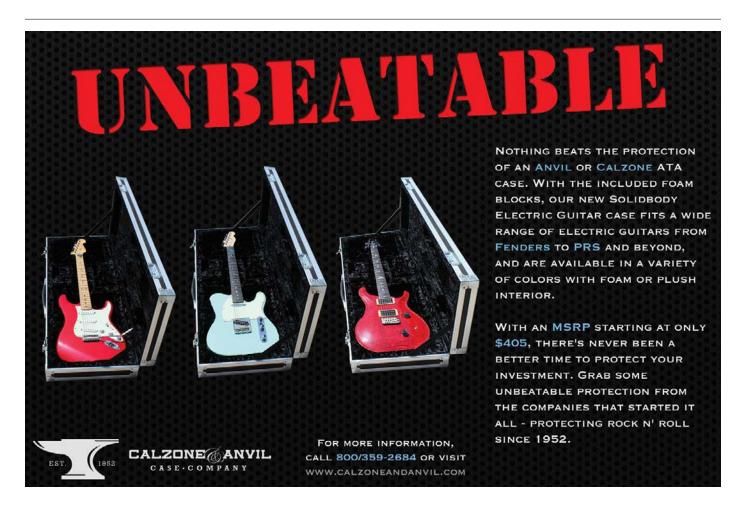
Darrell's sound was definitely in his hands, but his legendary preference for solid-state amplifiers played a major role in delivering his riffs with maximum tonnage. "Solid-state amps are more in-yourface," he told GP. "I'm not going for soft sounds, and I ain't lookin' for no warm sound. For what I'm doing, I can't get enough f****n' chunk! I won a Randall half-stack in a guitar contest when I was younger that had a natural nastiness to it. I knew that nobody had really grabbed a

hold of that tone, so I built my sound around it."

But talking about Darrell's playing in terms of lead and rhythm misses the beauty of his style as a whole. "Anybody can tune the guitar down and lay a finger across the frets, but that wasn't the deal back in the day," he said. "Back then you had to have some chops to be on top. The roots of my style go back to Van Halen, Kiss, Black Sabbath, and Led Zeppelin, where you get 'the full-meal deal,' you know. You play the leads, bend the strings, pull the whammy bar, chunk the heavy chords, and keep it spontaneous. Nothing against any of the new metal bands, but some of these guys don't play any leadsperiod. Maybe the day of the guitar hero isn't shining all that bright right now, but you should use all of the elements of your playing. If you're only doing one thing or the other, you ought to take a look at your playing-if just to find the beauty in the things that are left out."

"Dimebag Darrell was the epitome of rock and roll the genuine article. He was also a true friend and inspiration in our lives. C.J., Stevie, Jason, myself, and especially Dave, could not be prouder to be called his friends and family."

-Mike Luce of Drowning Pool



355C NECVEW february 2005

"Dime was one of those rare players who not only sounded great and played amazing guitar parts, but also played with an intensity you could feel. He was also the only person ever to get me to take a drink of alcohol. This tragedy couldn't have happened to a nicer guy."

-John 5

I'LL CAST A SHADOW

For well over a decade, Darrell had poured every ounce of his being into Pantera. The years of hard work began paying off bigtime by the mid '90s, as Darrell was able to realize one of his lifelong dreams. "I told myself a long time ago that if I could ever afford to buy a house, I wanted to have a studio in the backyard, just like Edward Van Halen-my very own 5150," Darrell said early last year. "So when I found this house in the Worthington Gardens section of Arlington, [Texas], and saw the barn behind it, I knew I was set. At first the barn was going to just be a jam room, but it immediately turned into a full-on recording studio. I have every format in there-Otari Radar, Tascam DA-88s, a 24-track analog machine—everything. We ended up tracking The Great Southern Trendkill, Reinventing the Steel, and the Damageplan record, New Found Power there. I love the recording studio, man. Starting from the

ground up, building the tracks, mixing it, and putting it out. I'll do whatever it takes as long as it's jammin'."

And jammin' was what Darrell cared about the most. To him, playing the guitar was pure lifeblood. The mixture of love and intensity he brought to the instrument was evident in every note he played. He inspired young guitarists by being a badass on his instrument, and inspired everyone he came in contact with by being a funny, spontaneous, and genuine person. I had never laughed as much during an interview as I did when I spoke with Darrell last year before the release of New Found Power. And after our chat was over, I remember how inspired and proud I was to be a guitarist. His enthusiasm was that infectious. "I love the guitar so much that it all sounds great to me no matter who is playing it," he said. "Even if somebody sucks, I can't hear the suckiness-it's all beautiful to me, brother."



DIG HOW COOL DIME IS IN THIS RANDALL CLINIC FROM 1993.



CLASSIC INTERVIEW

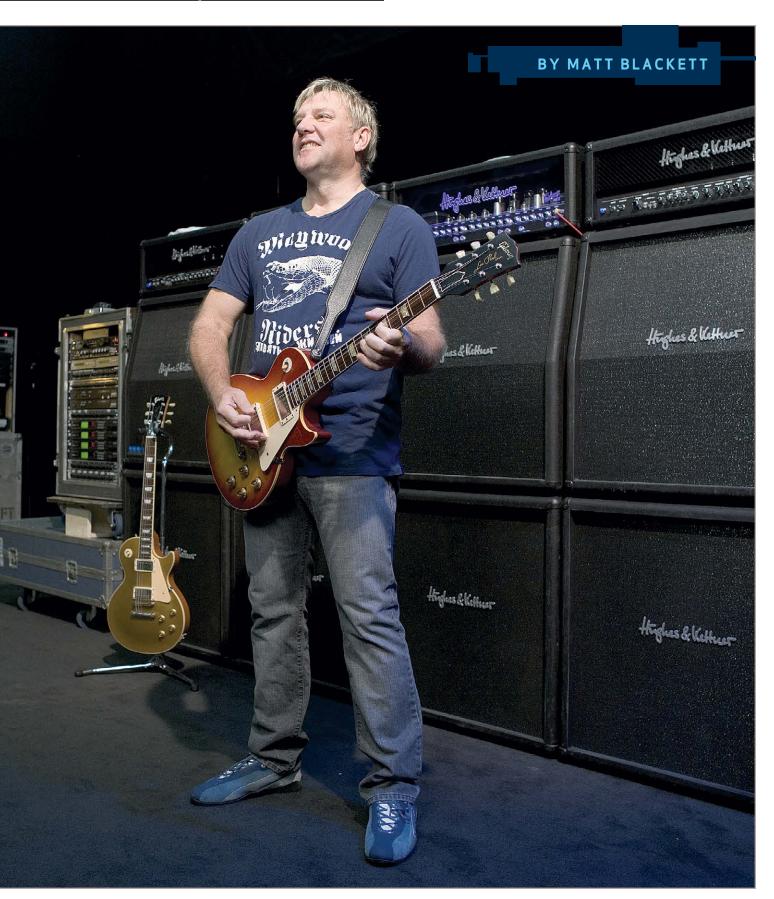
from the February 2005 issue of Guitar Player magazine



55 Cinterv



september 2007



classic interview



"I like making the part heavy by the way I play, and not by the equipment I'm using." Madison Square Garden, 2002.

FEATURE

Different Strings

Alongside Lee's frenetic bass lines and Peart's hyperkinetic drum accents there is Lifeson-equal parts rock dude, sonic adventurer, and texturalist. His huge washes of chorused power chords and clever arpeggios have been the mortar between Lee and Peart's bricks since the three first threw down together. And what they have built together is pretty damn impressive, with just about every record going platinum, every show sold out, and every fan totally diehard. Each step of the way, Lifeson and his pals have been musicians' musicians.

After all, this is the band that famously tracked its 11-minute opus "Xanadu" in one take. First take, entire band. That's kind of the musical equivalent of pitching a perfect game-with 27 three-pitch strikeouts in a row. As unfathomable as that may seem, the first few minutes of a Rush rehearsal prove how they did it-as well as give the distinct impression they can do it again whenever they want to. The three of them hit their instruments with a confidence and authority that few bands can touch. They are one of the tightest rock bands of all time, but not in a quantized, Pro Tools kind of way. Theirs is a much more elusive tightness—one that comes from an almost imperceptible, indefinable looseness. Listening to them rehearse, it's impossible to know if Lifeson is ahead of Peart's beat and Lee is behind it, or vice versa. The only thing you can be sure of is, whatever the heaviest way to hit a downbeat might be, these guys hit it that way every time. They are crushingly heavyeven when playing happy-sounding major key tunes. And Lifeson effortlessly cranks out unbelievably expansive soundscapes with three-dimensional richness, crystalline highs, and subterranean lows. This is the way he plays every day. It's who he is.

Lifeson is an impressive guy on every level. He walks into a room, and he takes it over, but in the mellowest of ways. He looks far younger than his 53 years, with a disarming smile and an innocence that

belies his long career—a career that has taken him from high school gymnasiums to huge arenas and all points in between. He is humble and unassuming about his talents, as well as thoughtful and considerate-not like a Hallmark card, but in the sense that he thinks about every question before answering. If he ever gives what appears to be a stock answer, it's only because he has, over the years, found a turn of phrase that he likes—the same way anyone might repeat a favorite lick or a good joke.

At Rush's rehearsal space on the Toronto waterfront, Lifeson took time to expound on what makes this band tick. He also talked about Snakes & Arrows [Atlantic], the first Rush studio album in five years, and the album's producer, Rush fan Nick Raskulenicz [Foo Fighters, The Mars Volta, Fu Manchu]. He bore the scar of a bizarre golfing accident that had left a bruise under his eye—although it couldn't diminish his deep love for the game of golf anymore than the scars the music business has left on him could lessen his passion for playing guitar.

Your producer, Nick Raskulenicz, was hardly even born when your first record came out. How did his relative youth influence the sessions?

He says the first concert he ever saw was us. His mom took him. He's a Rush fan, but he's really a huge fan of music in general, and he's a player—he plays drums, guitar, and bass. The interesting thing with him is he realizes the whole history of this band-where we've been and what we've done. We're always looking for something to move us forward, and, a lot of times, we tend to run from our past in the search for a new place. He pointed out how important it is for us to remember where we came from, and to integrate all of that as we move forward. He told us not to discount things from our past.

Nick also encouraged me to approach the guitar sound of the record so that everything would have a pretty big body to it. Geddy was a big proponent of doing the record straight ahead, with very few overdubs. But once we got into it, and started to develop it, the size and the character of the tunes started to grow, and it made it hard to do it that way. There are a lot



Snakes & Arrows producer Nick Raskulenicz was just 12 years old when he saw Rush's Moving Pictures tour. Here, Raskulenicz talks about what it was like to work with Lifeson, and how the two of them created the album's huge guitar tones.

"What I wanted to do with this record was to make the sonic follow up to Moving Pictures," says Raskulenicz. "I always felt something happened between Moving Pictures and Signals. Moving Pictures was dark and heavy and ethereal with a ton of guitar. But when Signals came out, it was like there was

"When Alex decided to do his guitar tracks with Geddy and Neil at Allaire Studios in New York, rather than at his house, I was stoked. It would have sounded great at his house, but the vibe and the camaraderie of them all in the same place was really important to make the record the right way.

"I had a pretty clear idea of what I felt the record needed from a guitar tone standpoint. I went to Alex's house on one of my first meetings with him, and I asked him where his old Hiwatts and Marshalls were. Well, he doesn't have any of that stuff anymore. I thought there was some big Rush warehouse with all that stuff, but there's not. I have a lot of that kind of gear, so I brought a really great old Hiwatt, a great old Orange, a kick-ass Marshall, and a few newer amps. He sent for his Roland JC-120—I wanted him to bring that. I set up five or six different cabs—all with different speakers—and then I set up all the heads in the control room: the Orange, Marshall, Rivera, Budda, Hiwatt, and a couple of his Hughes & Kettners. We put a couple of combos in the tracking room, as well. There must have been ten amps set up. I used Little Labs PCP Instrument Distro amp splitters, and I chained two of those together so one guitar could feed six amps at once. Each amp was on its own mixer fader, so Alex and I could call up different combinations of any of them for whatever the song needed. I would mic all the cabs with a Shure SM7 and a Neumann U47 FET. I miked the bottom speakers, routed the signals into Neve mic preamps, and then I summed them to one track. We used tube mics on some of the combo amps—like the 18-watt handwired Marshall and the JTM45 2x12-to get more detail. Those amps weren't cranked super loud, and they have a huge sound at that low volume.

"A lot of Alex's tones were blended with dirty and clean amps. On the prechorus to 'Armor and Sword,' we used the Orange head and a Marshall 2550. The Marshall was totally saturated, and the Orange was totally clean to provide the body and low end that the Marshall didn't give. On the main riff, there's a track where all Alex does is play one note on the G string through the JC-120 with the chorus on. That's an awesome sound. The 'Far Cry' intro was his Tele through the little 18-watt Marshall, and he did two tracks of his goldtop Les Paul through a Budda 45-watt combo for the main riff. He used a Rivera Knucklehead Tre on 'Spindrift.' We needed a huge bottom end, and that's just a fantastic head. I also brought my 1964 Vox AC30, and a lot of the semi-clean tones on the record were that amp.

"Alex has a lot of great guitars, but I really wanted him to bring his old Gibson ES-335 that he used on Caress of Steel and 2112. That guitar is on 50 percent of this record, and it's part of the reason this record has that familiar sound to it, because that's the guitar we all love.

"Another key element to the guitar tones were these Mogami Platinum cables. I've listened to every guitar cable there is trying to find the quietest ones with the least tone coloration, and these are the absolute best guitar cables I have ever used.

"One thing the band did for this record was writing everything on acoustic. If you listen to the demos, there's no electric guitar—it's all layers of acoustics. There's a bed acoustic track on almost every song that goes along with the heavy stuff. Alex uses these Garrisons that sound fantastic, and I also got him to bring out some of his old Gibson jumbos and the Gibson 12-string he used on 'Closer to the Heart.' Mixing was challenging, because we had all these big electrics and these giant acoustics. On some parts, there could be 15 guitar tracks! We had to clear some space to hear them all, so we filtered the acoustics pretty heavily. If you soloed one of the acoustics, it might sound like it's coming out of an AM radio because we had taken all of the bottom out of it.

"I've been lucky enough to work with some great bands, and I've made some great records, but I don't know if I'll ever have an experience like this ever again. I even tried to get them to cancel their tour, because I wanted to keep working! If I get to do another album with them, I want to make a double album!" —MB

classic interview

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of big guitar layers, and Nick was really instrumental in achieving that, as was [engineer] Rich Chycki. The two of them worked so well together.

What did you hear in his body of work that made you feel that he could be a good fit for you guys?

I hear a lot of these producer CDs, and it's a little surprising how much crap is on some of them. On Nick's, everything was really well crafted. The songs were solid, the sounds were solid, and the mixes were solid. To us, it sounded like a guy who gets really involved with the arrangements, the songwriting, and how the songs come to life.

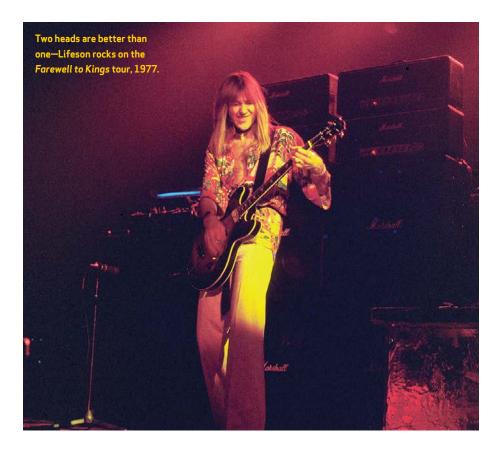
I would guess some producers might be intimidated by all that you've done, and therefore be hesitant to tell you to change something.

I suppose—but that's certainly not the type of producer we want. We want someone who is engaged, and who is not afraid to say what they think. When we bring someone in, we expect them to suggest alternatives. If it works, great. If it doesn't, that's great, too.

What kind of suggestions did Nick make?

There were a bunch of songs he didn't do anything with. There were a number where he might make minor changes to the arrangements—a slightly longer chorus, or a shorter bridge. That sort of thing. He made major changes to a couple of songs, such as switching the prechorus with the chorus on "Spindrift." He thought that a few of the parts on "The Main Monkey Business" were superfluous, so we cut those out. But what he was really great at was squeezing the last ounce of performance from all of us. We'd get a take, and it would be great, and Nick would say, "That was awesome! Do you mind going back in and trying it one more time?" I gotta say, we fed off that. Every single day, when I got up in the morning, I couldn't wait to get into work. It was such a fun and exciting experience.

You originally planned on doing your guitar parts at home. How did you end up recording at Allaire—the New York studio



where Snakes & Arrows was recorded?

The intention at Allaire was to get drum tracks. That's it. Geddy and I talked about this on our way there. He said, "I don't care how many bass tracks I get down. As soon as the drum tracks are done, we're coming home. We're going to work in Toronto, and try to have a semblance of a normal life while we're working."

In fact, I had spent some time at my studio getting ready. I had amp heads stacked on the desk in the control room. I had the speaker cabinets set up, and all the mics laid out. I was really looking forward to doing guitars at my studio because I know the room, and I'm comfortable there. But when we got to Allaire and Neil had gotten his first track done, we hung out in the control room until 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning. We just got into the vibe, and we soaked up the room and the sound. The energy is so positive there. It was really a great place to be. All of our plans flew out the window at that point.

Then, of course, there was a panic. I thought I was just doing bed tracks, and I wouldn't need all my gear. So I had a couple of amps, and maybe half a dozen gui-

tars. But rather than ship all of my stuff to Allaire, I decided to go with what we had. Nick had brought some great old amps—a 50-watt Marshall, a 100-watt Marshall, a 20-watt Marshall combo, a 50-watt Marshall combo, and a great Vox AC30. They had a lot of stuff at Allaire, as well, like this Bogner cab that sounded really, really awesome, and I had some of my Hughes & Kettner gear with me. So we stacked a bunch of heads in the control room, and we set up this huge line of amps out in the room

Do you enjoy getting out of your comfort zone like that?

I totally love it. It keeps everything fresh and exciting. Having that variety is really important. Sonically, it seems to me that with a lot of records you go through these periods where there's *the* guitar sound and *the* drum sound. I guess that's true with all eras, but it's certainly happening now with guitar. A lot of the guitar tones seem to be quite similar. They're quite saturated. It's great to go back to old vintage gear, because my style of playing is not cranked to a million and super distorted. I always tend to pull back on the

PHOTOS: MORSE—ROBERT KNIGHT / RETNA; GILBERT, LALONDE, JOHNSON—ROBBD. COHEN / RETNA LTD: MOORE—ø BILLY TOMPKINS / RETNA LTD.

guitar, and pull back on the amp a bit so it's more in the hands—the hands express what the part is. I like making the part heavy by the way I play, and not by the equipment I'm using.

Let's talk about some of those parts. How did you get the tones in "Far Cry"?

There are a lot of guitars on that song. I think part of it was my Gibson ES-335 the one from back in the day. [Editor's note: To learn what other Rush tracks Lifeson's ES-335 has appeared on—as well as get a breakdown of some of his best-known parts—see "The Lifeson Chronicles" in the August 2002 GP.] I used my 335 for a lot of this record—along with my Les Pauls and my Tele. Those were the primary instruments. The wahtype sound in the intro is Nick's Mu-Tron pedal. I'm also running my pick up and down the string as I play. The solo was my ES-335 into the Hughes & Kettner Switchblade and Bogner cab. To get the sustain in the solo, we just cranked up the monitors. I hit the notes, held my guitar up to the control room monitors, and shook the crap out of it. It was screaming loud.

Youdon'tstandoutintheroomwithyour cabinets, then?

I don't. Well, for a specific need, I will. But I'll tell you-communication is so much easier in the control room. Dialing in the sound with the heads there is so much easier. I think you pay a little bit for it in terms of cord length and things like that, but, ultimately, it's a better way to work for me.

How many guitar tracks are in the verse of "Armor and Sword"?

For the verse and chorus, it's one track of acoustic and two tracks of electric, plus a third electric playing the harmonics. Most of the clean tones were through the JC-120 or the AC30. The crunchier tones were the AC30 cranked up, or the smaller Marshall combo. The heavier distorted tones were the Switchblade through the Bogner cabinet, or a Hughes & Kettner cab loaded with Celestion Greenbacks.

There's some really cool interplay between you and Geddy on "Armor and Sword." It almost sounds as if he's extending your chord voicings so you don't have to.

Yeah—and he's playing chords on his bass, as well. I've always tried to play fair-

WORKING MEN

When asked to reflect on some of the great guitarists Rush has toured with over the years, Lifeson said: "It was always great to be in the presence of other players, to watch them play and get to know them. It's not like we were ever competing. We were brothers. That's the way I've always looked at it, and I much prefer to look at it that way. I learn from all of them, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to play with some amazing players. I see it as a gift."

Now some of those guitarists get the chance to repay that gift, and talk about what it was like to be on the road with Rush.



Steve Morse

"The Steve Morse Band was on the Power Windows tour, and it is a highlight of my career. I remember Alex as being one of the most relaxed and cordial rock stars I'd ever met. I loved the way he used big chord voicings with open strings included to make a broad backdrop for the tunes. Some of his voicings have become classics of the electric guitar—like his chords in 'Limelight.' Everything about that

tour was great. Rush is one of the most original, honestly hard-working, solid-as-a-rock bands. Bands like Rush and Dream Theater are the role models that show bands can exist by constantly pleasing their devoted fan base with great music. Thanks, Alex, Geddy, and Neil!"



Paul Gilbert

"My first big arena rock tour was when Mr. Big supported Rush on their Presto tour. One of the best memories of my life is running up and down the stairs of the arena every day while Rush was doing their soundcheck. I felt truly lucky. Some people jog to a Walkman. I could jog to Rush live every day! I love Alex's guitar playing so much. I spent countless hours playing along with Hemispheres, Moving Pictures, and 2112

when I was a teenager. I love his shimmering chords, his giant single-note riffs, and his memorable and airguitar-inspiring solos. Plus, he had an awesome perm, giant bell bottoms, and a kimono. Damn! My favorite rock instrumental songs are by Rush. When I began to write my own instrumental record, I used late-70s Rush music as my sonic template. The song 'Hurry Up' was the result. Actually, 'Hurry Up' means Rush!"



Larry LaLonde

"Primus toured with Rush on their Roll the Bones tour. They're the one band that we're all fans of, and Alex is way up there on my personal list of important guitar players. It's him and Eddie Van Halen probably. I was always really into the Moving Pictures album and I love "The Trees" with that classical intro. That's what's great about Alex-he's so well rounded. He plays innovative chords, incredible

melodies, and solos that just stick in your head. He combines all that with a great tone and an amazing use of effects—I mean there's no way you can improve that."



Vinnie Moore

"Opening for Rush was definitely a highlight for me. I watched their show almost every night. I really liked Alex's playing, and I especially dug his rhythm parts. He has some very catchy riffs and cool, half-distorted sounds. I like the chord voicings he uses and the way he orchestrates his parts—I think that's his signature. I will tell you one thing, though—Alex can't play very well when you put pictures

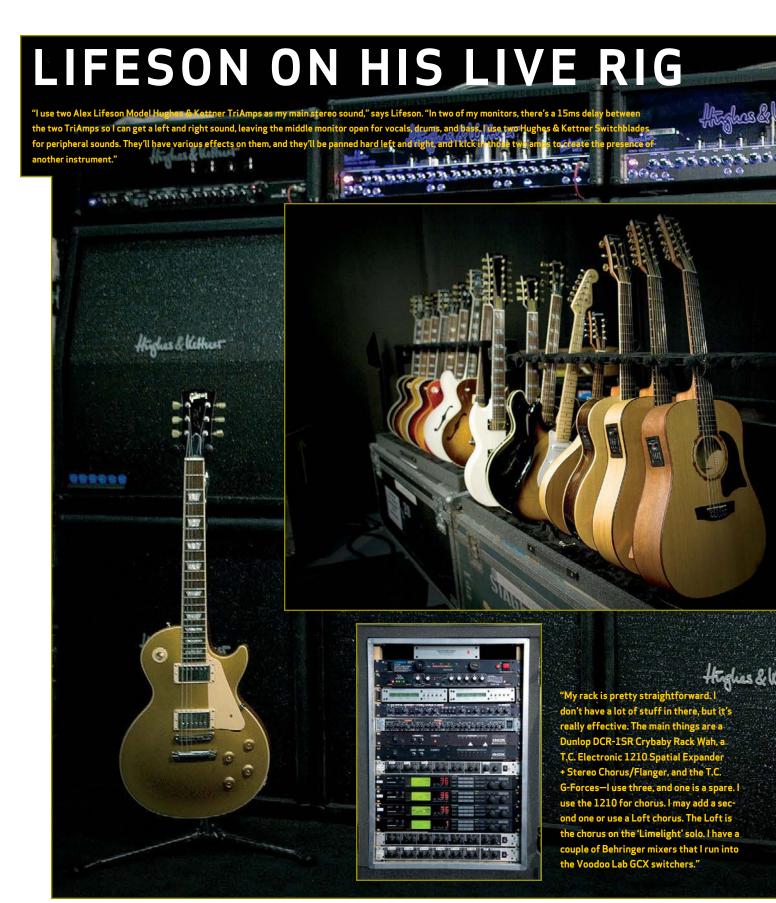
from girly magazines on his pedalboard and monitors. I tried this on the last show of the tour, and he made more mistakes in five minutes than he has probably ever made. He had to get his tech to take them away so he could get through the second song!"



Eric Johnson

"My band toured with Rush in the early '90s. Alex got a very ferocious tone—his style really filled up their three-piece sound extremely well. Rush is one of the main innovators of their style of music, and they've consistently stood the test of time. Alex has a lot of passion in his playing, and that's one of the things that makes Rush's appeal so strong."

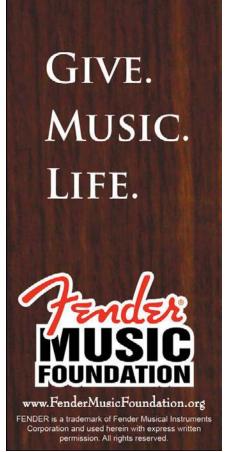
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ly broad, big chords, because in a threepiece band, I think you need that. When he plays chords, it takes a little pressure off me, and then I can play single-note lines, and we don't feel like there's a hole in the sound. We don't feel the need to use keyboards like we did at one time to take up all that space.

Are you playing mandolin on "Workin' Them Angels"?

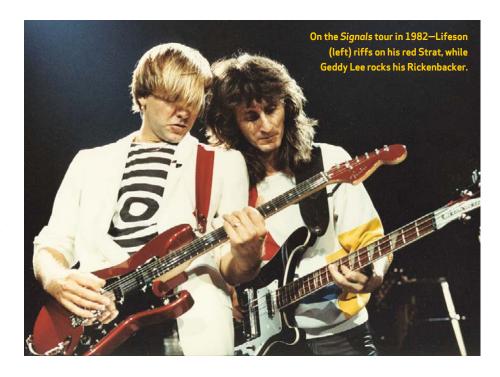
Yes-mandolin and bouzouki. That's a funny story. I went to visit a friend in Greece last summer who had a bouzouki. When I was there, I bought one, and I would get up every morning around 6:00 am, and sit on the edge of this cliff with my feet literally dangling over. I would sit there with my coffee, strumming this bouzouki, and learning how to play it. These little fishing boats would go by, and the fishermen would be shouting and waving at me. It was awesome. So I had to get it on this record somewhere. I had this really nice background of mandolin in the solo section-it was very organic. But none of the solos I cut seemed to suit what was going on with the song. They had a bouzouki at Allaire, and I used it for the melody on top of the mandolin rhythm. It's the only time I've played bouzouki on a Rush record.

"The Larger Bowl" is totally driven by your acoustic guitar. Did you write it on acoustic?

Yes. Everything was written on acoustic. For "The Larger Bowl," I played a Garrison G-50 CE and a G-50 12-string. I think I used a Gibson J-150 on the second half of the verse for a slightly different tonality. In the studio, the acoustic tracks were primarily constructed with the J-150, the Garrison 6- and 12-strings, a Larrivée small body, and a Gibson J-55 in Nashville tuning.

How do you like the Garrisons?

I really like them a lot. There's something about the sound that is very controlled and very tight. It's not a deep sound—like you would get from a jumbo-and it's not as warm as a dreadnought. They have a brightness in the top



end, and a tight bottom end. The concertstyle body just works nicely for me, and they're also very easy to play.

You've always been a big fan of the acoustic, but you seem more into it than ever.

I was playing a lot of acoustic guitar before we started the record. I went to see Tommy Emmanuel when he played here, and that was really inspiring. The way he caresses the notes is fantastic to watch. I went to see Stephen Bennett, and, afterward, we got together and played some. I tried to play his harp guitar-which was impossible to play. He gave me a half capo, and told me to have some fun with it. He said, "See what you can do when you have open strings on the top or the bottom." That was really inspiring, too. I ended up using that partial capo on "Bravest Face." I think the capo was on the fourth fret, and I played at the seventh fret with the top strings open. That was a funny thing. We were working on that song, and Geddy left the room. I was just sitting around, so I capoed a guitar, and started strumming. Nick said, "We've got to record that!" So he recorded me, and just inserted it into the song. It was one of those chancy things. Hence, I gave Stephen a credit on the record, because he moved me to think in different terms. I also had a meeting with David Gilmour when he was here.

It was the first time I'd seen him play. I went back to say hello, and he was a very engaging, charming guy. We talked a lot about the power of the acoustic in terms of writing, because it doesn't lie. It tells you straight up whether an idea

Your Jimmy Page influence comes out in "Hope." What do you like about the tuning on that song?

That song is in D, A, D, A, A, D. What I like about it is that the two As are next to each other, and one is always ringing out against the other. This tuning really makes it sound like there are multiple instruments playing because of all the sympathetic notes. I'm always trying different tunings. Some of them are terrible, but I love how they make you start all over again. All the things you know don't mean a thing, and that's very exciting to me.

Your solo on "The Larger Bowl" has a cleaner tone than you normally get.

I think that was my Tele and the Marshall 50- or 100-watt run very clean. I really wanted a solo like that-bright and clear. I think it's a little more uplifting and positive. To solo with that kind of tone, you really have to feel confident. You have to be able to express yourself with the limitations of not having the kind of sustain vou're used to.

Your solo tone on "Bravest Face" is the

cleanest you've ever put on a record.

That tone is super clean. It's my 335 and the AC30. That solo was so much fun, because I never get to solo with a tone like that. It required a whole different thought process, and I loved it. I wanted to keep going and going, but Nick said, "We've got it!"

Have you ever used AC30s on Rush records?

I did on Feedback, but not before that.

You sound exactly like yourself whether you're plugged into a Vox, a Marshall, a Gallien-Krueger, a Hiwatt, or a Hughes & Kettner. Do you still feel like yourself when you plug into a different rig?

That's a great question, but, yeah, I do. I totally do. I don't know what my sound is, or what my style is, or what makes it

different, but it always sounds familiar to me no matter what amp I'm playing through. I have things I always gravitate to-like I always take the volume down to 7 or 8. That's the first thing I do. I guess I've always felt that you've got to be able to go up somewhere. For a chunky sound, that's how I do it.

When will you open it all the way up?

For solos—or when I need something really heavy where I want to crush the bottom end.

What about the backwards textures in "Spindrift." They add an unsettling vibe to a song that's already pretty creepy.

We talked about the idea of having little 30-second bits at the beginning of songs. We didn't really develop that, but "Spindrift" was one example—as was

"The Way the Wind Blows." I thought it would be kind of cool to have some backwards stuff at the beginning. The song is so heavy that I thought something atmospheric in the intro might work. From there, it was a matter of messing around with the melody line, learning it backwards, and coming up with this thing that Neil called "psychedelic surf music." We wanted to create tension and creepiness until it gets to the chorus, which is very pumping and uplifting.

What are the other guitar layers?

There's an acoustic playing the staccato part, and I used Les Pauls and a 335 for the octaves to the melody.

Who came up with the main riff?

Ged and I came up with it while we were jamming. We never think in terms



Lifeson's old friends from the '70s (front row from left)—Gibson EDS-1275 doubleneck (later crushed at a Rush/Blue Oyster Cult gig), Gibson Dove acoustic used on "Closer to the Heart," Epiphone C-60 nylon string used on "The Trees," Gibson B-45 12-string also used on "Closer to the Heart," Gibson Les Paul used on All the World's a Stage. Back row from left-1969 ES-335 used on the first three Rush albums, 1976 Gibson ES-355 used on "The Trees" and much of Permanent Waves, and an unidentified Les Paul copy.

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of who wrote what. We start playing, and these things just come out. It's hard to describe how it works. "Far Cry," for example, was written in minutes, and the lyrics were done the next morning. We labor over some tunes for quite a while before they take shape, but some-like "Far Cry"—are done really quickly. That's always a relief.

You get super bluesy on "The Way the Wind Blows." You used a lot of blues scales early in your career on tunes such as "The Temples of Syrinx," but it didn't sound like the blues. This does. What's the difference?

I've always loved playing that way, but there was never really an outlet for it in our music. I'm a second-generation blues guy. I learned from Eric Clapton and Jimmy Page. I think it's deep inside me. Most of the stuff I played in the early days was based on blues scales. But kind of like Jimmy Page used to do, if you play those scales in a certain way, they take on a whole different character. This was an opportunity to be a little—I don't know if "purer" is the right word—but I wanted to be more rooted in that genre. It seemed to work really well for that song, and it's certainly a lot of fun to play. That was my 335 into the Switchblade.

Rory Gallagher opened for Rush back in the '80s. Did you get any blues inspiration from him?

Absolutely. He was awesome. We opened for him in 1974, so it was great to do those shows with him in the '80s. I learned a lot from him. All those pick-harmonic things I do—I got those from him. I also loved his use of syncopated delays. I think he was an essential player for that period, and he was just a terrific person. He influenced a lot of guys. He was a huge influence on the Edge.

When you composed solos that were more modally based, like "Limelight," was that a conscious move away from blues scales?

I suppose so. You're always looking for something else-somewhere else to go, another area of sound to fill in.

You've gotten a lot of love for your "Limelight" solo. What are some solos that people don't mention as much that you feel contain your best playing?

"Emotion Detector" from Power Windows. That's one of my favorite solos. It has that combination of soulfulness and articulation that's very tense, but fluid at the same time. I have to say, though, that I think the "Limelight" solo is still my favorite. It's a unique sound—very elastic and plaintive. It's sad.

A defining characteristic of your solo-

ing-especially on tunes like "The Trees" and "YYZ"-is your use of really wide interval skips, often involving open strings. Where do you think that comes from?

I got a lot of that from Allan Holdsworth. Around that time in the late '70s, I was quite influenced by his left-hand work—the way he pulled and played without picking.

You've said many times that you don't think Rush could get signed in today's musical climate. What advice do you have for guitarists coming up today-knowing full well that they can't do it the way you did?

I think at the end of the day, it all comes down to persevering and learning your craft. If you're good, your chances of doing something are greater than if you're mediocre-although there's so much emphasis put on mediocrity these days. I think you have to stick with it, and figure out what satisfies you as a player, as a musician, and as a songwriter. It's certainly a lot more difficult out there. When we were coming up, the record company signed you for five records. They hoped the first three were the ones where you molded yourself, and the next two were the "payback" records. That situation doesn't exist anymore. Nobody takes chances anymore. I hold out hope that we're simply in a transitional period, and we just need to find a new direction, and a new way of doing things.



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CLASSIC INTERVIEW

from the September 2009 issue of Guitar Player magazine

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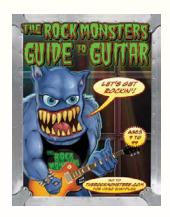
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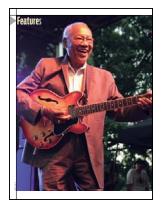
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COVER STORY

Budget Electric Roundup

On a budget? Who's not?!? We put eight great guitars that street for \$499 or less through their paces.

ARTISTS

Johnny Marr · Ernest Ranglin · Blake Mills · Robin Trower

NEW! FRETS ACOUSTIC SECTION

Greensky Bluegrass

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Epiphone Pro-1 Ultra

Acoustic Lesson!

David Grisman

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Happy Traum

Vintage Frets Excerpt

George Gruhn Vintage Catalogue (from the July 1985 issue of Frets)

LESSONS

Under Investigation

A thorough examination of a particular style or player. This month: Jim Weider's PRoJECT PERCoLATOR

You're Playing It Wrong

You might think you know how to play classic riffs like "Sunshine of Your Love." Here's the absolute real deal.

Carl Verheven Lesson

Verheyen dips into his lick book.

Fretboard Recipes

Harmonic Minor Scales

GEAR

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COVER STORY

Joe Bonamassa

The leading light of the blues-rock world discusses his approach to songwriting, details his latest rig, gives advice on guitar collecting, and talks about what it's like to be more famous than Danny Gatton.

ARTISTS

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A thorough examination of a particular style or player. This month: Reharmonizing a Todd Rundgren favorite.

You're Playing It Wrong

You might think you know how to play classic riffs like Peter Gabriel's "Solsbury Hill." Here's the absolute real deal.

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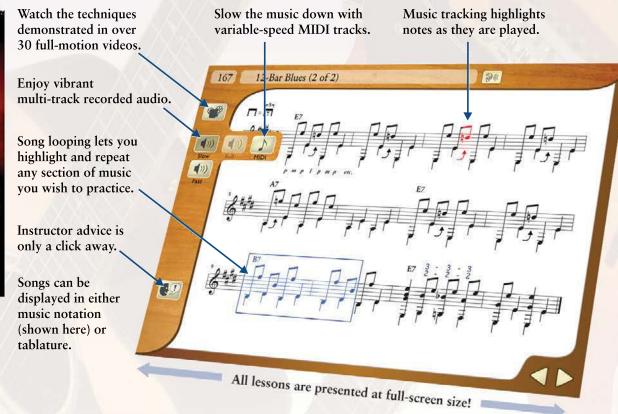


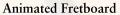
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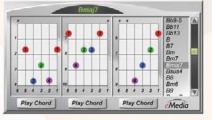








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MASTER CLASS

BUSTIN' OUT!

The Top 12 Coolest Ways to Play Outside Licks on Guitar

BY JEAN-MARC BELKADI

As a guitar instructor at GIT in Hollywood, California, I'm thrilled to report an exciting trend: Young guitar students are increasingly into playing again. That's not to imply there weren't still throngs of kids hungry to learn adventurous guitar styles during the height of the grunge, nü-metal, and pop-punk erasthree arguably uninventive, creativity-stifling periods in guitar's recent history. It's just that lately, well, lead guitar seems to be experiencing a resurgence, as it has once again captured the imaginations of up-and-coming guitarists everywhere.

But it's not just any kind of lead guitar my students want to learn. Whether they're into hard rock, hard bop, or any genre in between, the inspired newbies who come through my door often have one thing in common—they want to play rebellious, radical, harmonically irreverent lead guitar lines that annihilate all clichés. They want to play conversation-killing riffs that drop jaws and inspire wide-eyed fascination amongst their listeners and peers alike. In other words, these budding mavericks want to learn how to play outside.

In the spirit of fearless melodic extremists such as Arnold Schoenberg, Frank Zappa, John Coltrane, Allan Holdsworth, Buckethead, John Scofield, Scott Henderson, and other pioneers of the non-diatonic frontier, the following approaches will help you get off the beaten path the next time you're taking a solo. Why? Because sometimes nothing sounds more right than the wrong note. Here come 12 cool ways to hijack the scales, chords, and theory you already know in order to play unrestricted lead guitar lines that gleefully shatter the established notions of what you should or shouldn't play. So fasten your seatbelt. You've devoted years of practice to learning how to stay "in the lane" musically. We're now going to veer off the well-traveled highway of mainstream guitar and do some serious harmonic and melodic off-roading.



classic lesson

MAJOR REALIZATION

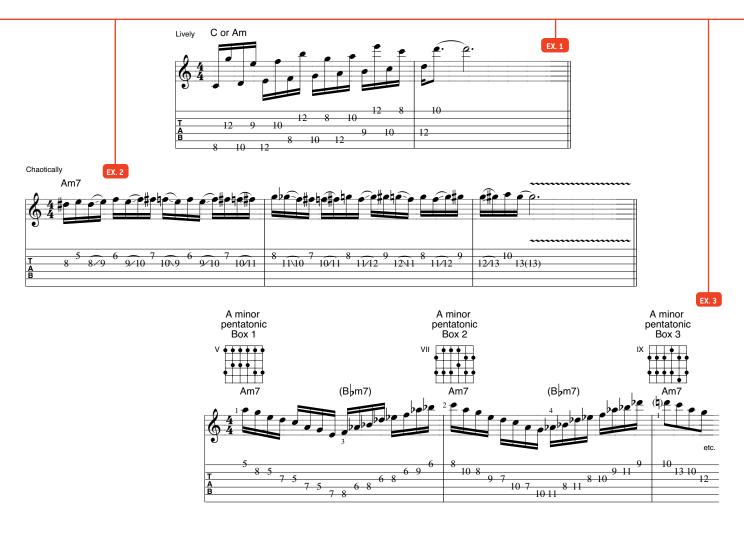
The first thing I point out to my students is that you don't necessarily have to play non-diatonically—that is, outside of the scale that suits the given tonality—to create the perceived effect of an outside lick. For instance, let's say you're improvising in the key of C major. Even if you never leave the C major scale, you can create a wildly subversive sound by attacking the scale with the simple pattern of wide intervals employed in Ex. 1. Where most guitarists' first instinct would be to improvise lyrical lines using stepwise, scalar motion, this example uses contrary motion on distant strings to create an extremely out sounding yet brightly diatonic, inside phrase. (The lick, of course, also works perfectly over Am, the relative minor of C.) As with all the other examples in this lesson, once you've learned the required moves, be sure to also try the phrase in reverse, as well as at a range of tempos.

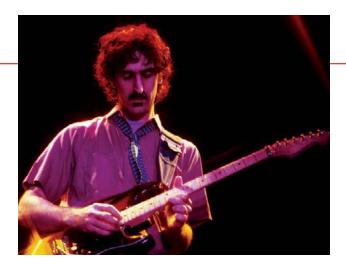
CHROMATIC ASSAULT

Another simple way to get outside sounds is through unbridled use of the chromatic scale—in other words, freely tagging any or every note on the fretboard, regardless of what key you are in. Using two strings and a chromatic pattern that employs ascending and descending slides, Ex. 2 is a sonic war machine. It's powered by an aggressive fretboard pattern that suggests the more strident and volcanic riffs of Vernon Reid, Buckethead, or Steve Lukather.

THE BIG DIPPER

Most guitarists know the minor pentatonic scale better than the back of their hands, yet don't realize how convenient it is for creating refreshingly *out* phrases. As demonstrated in **Ex. 3**, if the band is vamping on Am and you move the A minor pentatonic scale up a half-step for the second half of every measure, you imply the $B \mid m7$ harmony shown in



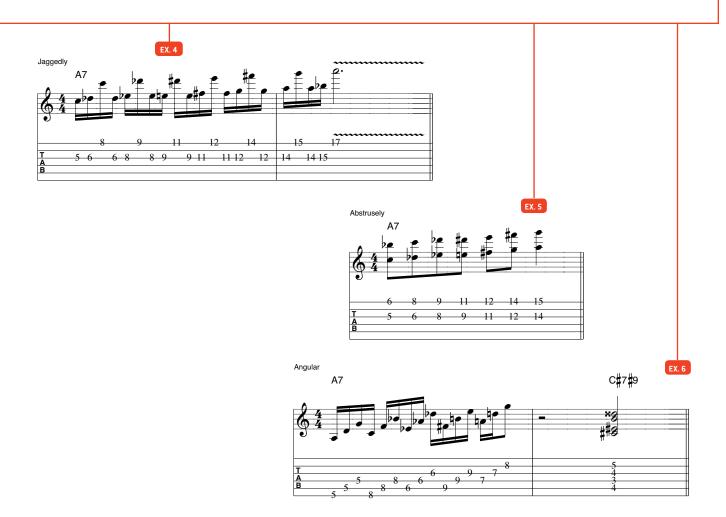


parentheses. As suggested by the three common pentatonic box patterns printed above the notation staff, this alternating inside/outside sound is created by blazing down eight notes of the first A minor box, shifting up one fret and ascending those same eight scale degrees of the Bb minor A Mother of Invention, and a father of radical rock guitar—the immortal, irreplaceable Frank Zappa.

pentatonic box, and repeating the process with each new pentatonic box. Dipping in and out of dissonance, this riff is a pentatonic rollercoaster ride.

HALF/WHOLE HELTER SKELTER

In a sense, Ex. 4, much like the major-scale riff that opened this lesson, utilizes string skipping, a simple pattern, and is fully diatonic. This time, however, it's only diatonic to a very mysterious sounding group of notes—the A diminished (or "half/whole") scale. Try this riff the next time you're vamping over A7, and you'll be sure to attract attention as you spray the background harmony with #9s, #11s, and other stinging chord extensions. For a meatier sound, try doublestop approaches to this scale, such as the one in Ex. 5.





If you don't hear spectacular melodies and entrancing harmonies in the wild modal explorations of John Coltrane, well, your ears need to get out more often.

KALEIDOSCOPIC PATTERNS

Taking inspiration from the late, great jazz maestro and GP columnist Howard Roberts, Ex. 6 proves that a fun, easy way to create outside sounds on the guitar is simply to play geometrical patterns on the fretboard. This lick, with its columns of ascending fourths, uses a visually predictable pattern to create an unpredictable melody. It generates one of an infinite number of new sounds you can create by simply visualizing a fretboard pattern and then playing it.

SUPREME HORN LICKS

Perhaps no musician made outside notes sound more in than John Coltrane. That's because there was always both



passion and concept behind every pitch that poured forth from his horn. One thing the legendary reedman was known for was superimposing various triads over a static background key, as in Ex. 7. Here, to stunning aural effect, a succession of major triads (G_b , E_b , C, and A)—each of which is a minor third lower in overall pitch than the previous—is projected against the background A7 vamp.

WHOLE-TONE HEAVEN

Don't forget to check out the whole-tone scale when you're looking for new melodic colors. One fingering for the scale is presented above the notation staff in Ex. 8. As if the enigmatic scale didn't sound out enough already, here, as we ascend the scale, we've applied octave displacement—where some scale tones have been bumped up an octave-to heighten the notes' already ethereal quality. Ex. 9 offers a two-string wholetone pattern that's fun to play fast.

DID MEAN TO IMPOSE

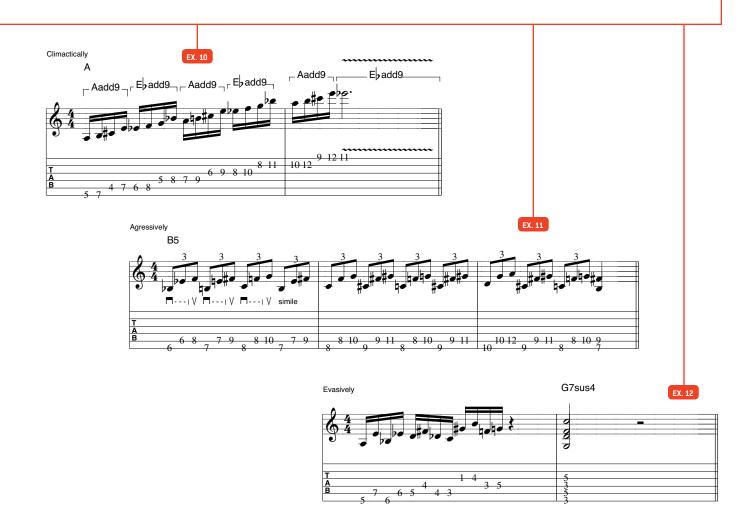
Another fun demonstration of superimposition is Ex. 10. Here, alternating Aadd9 and Ebadd9 arpeggios are stamped onto an ordinary background harmony of A major. Building half of the riff's add9 arpeggios on the key's tritone, Eb—the so-called "devil's interval"—we add a dangerous and dissonant melodic intrigue to the otherwise happy sounding passage.

SWEEPING SUCCESS

For some rising triplets that tap into the innate power of a B5 groove, give Ex. 11 a spin. If blazing speed appeals to you, know that this lick can be executed quickly by playing the first two pitches in each triplet with a nimble downward sweep of the pick.

12-TONE ROWS

Few if any licks sound more modern and atonal than 12-tone



melodies—one of which is presented in the first measure of our final phrase, appropriately numbered Ex. 12. But Austrian-born composers Arnold Schoenberg and Josef Matthias Hauer were pioneering angular 12-tone music as early as 1919. The concept behind this genre of composition is simple: Arrange all 12 notes of the chromatic scale in whatever sequence you like in a row in whichunlike tonal music-no group of notes predominates. The way you eliminate tonal and modal focus is simply to ensure that no pitch recurs until all of the other 11 have been played. This idea is easy in theory, but tricky to put into practice on the fretboard.

OUTWARD BOUND

Now that you've tackled all the riffs in this lesson, realize that each example herein is merely a musical springboard. Once a given technique has launched you in a new musical direction, experiment with

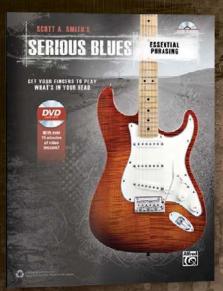
anything that can alter your melodic and timbral trajectory for further outside adventures. This can mean tweaking the tempo, changing the melodic direction, employing dynamics, engaging effects, accenting select notes while ghosting others, changing the time signature or rhythmic groupings, or transposing the phrase up or down in pitch. Each example has been presented with no key signature (i.e. in the key of C) because, although chord symbols are provided for every example, they are to be treated only as possible harmonies the rhythm section might play behind the written lick. (Don't forget that often the quickest way to make a lick sound out is to simply modify or substitute the chords that accompany it.) And finally, be sure to innovate. Take inspiration from these techniques and invent some of your own outside approaches, because if everyone started playing these rad riffs, they would lose their rebel sound.

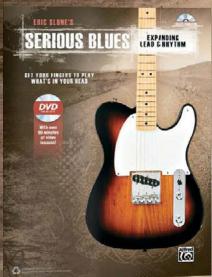


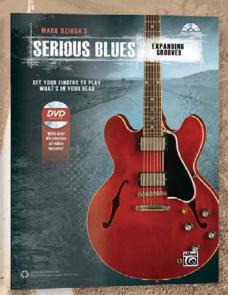
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A GREAT SOLOIST GOES SOLO

It's tough enough to maintain a successful career on the major labels if you play radio-friendly, vocal-based music. Amazingly, though, Larry Carlton thrived on the majors for decades as an instrumental artist, making his recording career all the more impressive. So why then, with over two dozen solo albums to his name, has Carlton suddenly gone "indie" and formed a label called 335 Records?

"These days," says Carlton's manager and 335 Records co-founder Robert Williams, "being with a major label is like being in a building that is ready to fall during the next earthquake. Because Larry did over 500 major-label sessions a year for seven years and has released over 26 of his own records, he gained a real insight into what's been happening in the industry. So he decided to build a new business model that would work not only for him and his artist friends, but also for new and emerging artists."

"I want 335 records to be as diverse as my career has been," says Carlton, who has proven the label's diversity already with its first round of releases,



which includes a Michelle Pillar Christmas album, upcoming Laurie Wheeler release, a charity album in tribute to the musical compositions of

Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej (performed by Carlton and friends), and Live In Tokyo, which features Carlton in concert with another great guitarist, Robben Ford. "This live album is a perfect example of what this label is about," continues Carlton. "People have been asking me for years, 'When are you and Robben going to record together?' With 335 Records I now have the ability to give them that project."

For more info about all things Larry Carlton, visit larrycarlton.com or Carlton's online video site, mr335.tv. -JG

How Blue Can You Get?

LARRY CARLTON'S TIPS ON GOING DEEP WITH THE BLUES

COMPILED BY JUDE GOLD

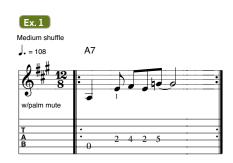
HAVING WON MULTIPLE GRAMMY AWARDS,

having released a successful string of solo albums, having played lead guitar on dozens of influential rock and pop records, and having a signature line of Gibson 335s produced in his name, Larry Carlton has been blessed to see more than a few of his dreams come true. Now, with his new TrueFire multimedia course 335 Blues [available online at larrycarlton.com and truefire.com], another of Carlton's goals has been realized: "I can finally address many of the questions I get asked all the time about my blues playing," says the guitarist. "I've been very fortunate over the years to play with many of my favorite blues musicians. Now I get a chance to share what I've learned."

If you love electric blues guitar (and who doesn't?), including Larry Carlton's blues playing (again, who doesn't?), then this new instructional video may be a dream come true for you too. It finds Carlton sharing fundamental yet crucial blues axioms every guitarist should live by, and works its way up to more elaborate blues approaches such as the use of altered chords and bebop-influenced lead lines. Here, in Mr. 335's own words and music, are some excerpts from his expansive, multi-disc blues seminar. -JG

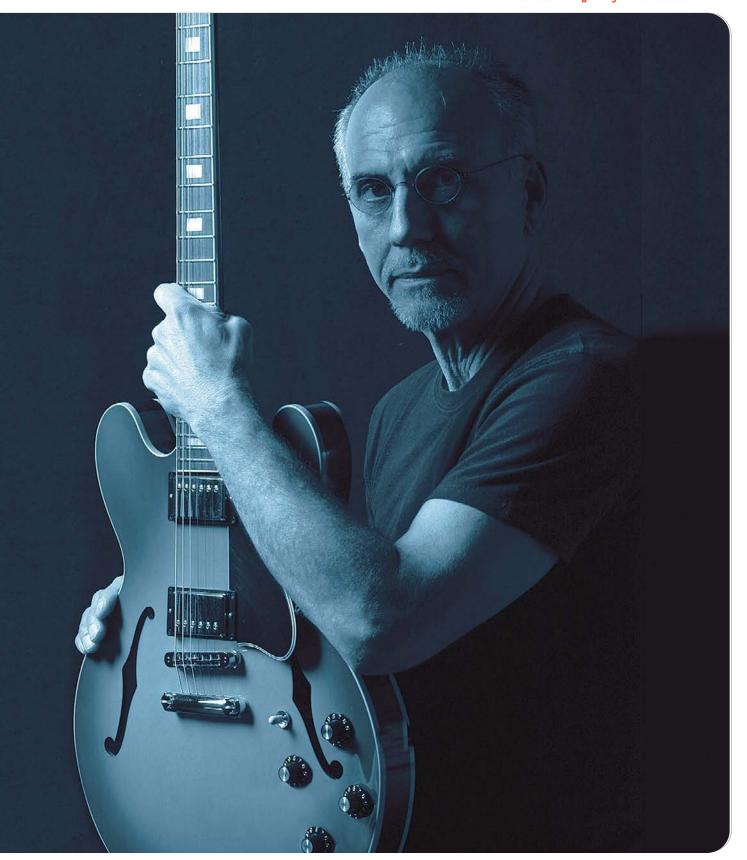
RHYTHM RULES

Let's start out by working with a simple shuffle in the key of A. What I'd first like to do is explain that when you're playing a rhythm guitar part like this [Ex. 1], it's really important to focus on the hi-hat and the snare, because this little muted part should fit perfectly with the bass and drums. And when I'm playing this, my ears are big-they're listening to where the time is so that the part is right in time with the hi-hat. That G note [fourth string, 5th fret] is



september 2007

"Always try to get in the habit of saying to yourself, 'Do I $\it mean$ what I'm playing? Is this something I really want someone to hear?"



LESSONS Master Class

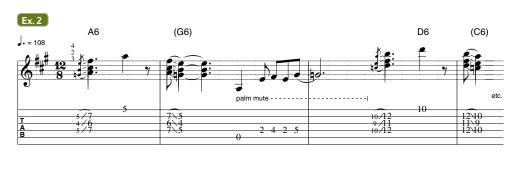
on the upbeat. The placement of that note against the hi-hat and the bass is really going to help determine whether this part grooves or not. That little accent right there can really make it bubble along good. If I'm a little early or a little late on that note, which is the anticipated note, it's going change the feel of the line significantly, so it's very important that while I'm coming up with a line, I listen to the bass and drums and really place it in the center of their groove.

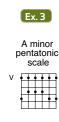
And if you're going to develop your muted part a little bit-perhaps put some accents in, some little pushes, some chords—that's when your ears

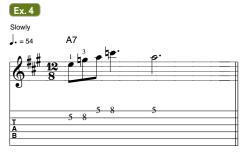
have to be very, very big, so that those accents come right between those hi-hat beats. That's what'll make your rhythm section gel really well. In the next chorus, I might start developing this little part with guide tones and guide chords [Ex. 2]. These sounds give a little more pad for the solo, which makes the soloist very comfortable. The guide voicings I'm playing are an A6 sliding down to a G6—even though the bass is holding the root A the whole time—then D6-C6 for the IV chord (with the bass playing D). This is one of those sounds that all blues players use at some point; it's part of blues vocabulary.

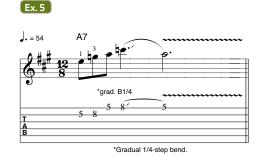
WHAT IS HIP

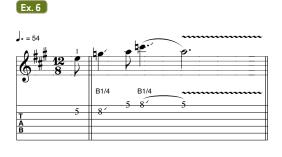
Most of us know the notes from this position [Ex. 3]. There's a lot of music to be made out of this shape. You don't have to know a special scale or a special mode or anything. With this one position, you can play blues. It raises the question: What makes one guy sound a little hipper than the next guy when playing this shape? Well, it has to do with how the notes in this position are phrased, how they're expressed. For instance, if you were to play this little line [Ex. 4], notice that the C note [first string, 8th fret] has nothing on it—it's just a note. But as soon as you put either a little vibrato on it, or a little

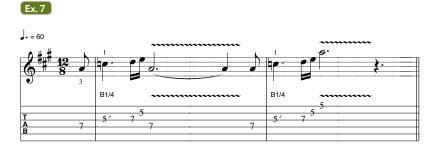












Master Class

LESSONS

bend that hints that the note is moving up a bit, it becomes a lot different [Ex. 5].

Notice that after I played that bent C, I did not re-pick the A that follows. I pulled off to it, and then added some vibrato. That's pretty cool—suddenly this little lick has a thing to it, doesn't it? You can even bend the G, too [Ex. 6]. Now it's starting to sound like the blues! This is just one way to express these four notes. You have the options to do any of these same things on the rest of the notes in this position. For example, do a little bend with the index finger [Ex. 7], and put a little vibrato on the last note of the first bar. Play the phrase again, ending on a high note [bar 2]. Express thyself!

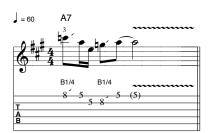
STORYTELLING

Let's talk about improvisation. There are some tools that I think can help you become a better improviser. First, make sure to take anything you can play in your comfort zone find out ways to play it in other positions on the neck. That will free you on the fingerboard to improvise more fluidly, because you're not stuck in one or two positions. For instance, listen to the difference in this little line [Ex. 8] if I move it up one position [Ex. 9]. The tone is completely different. You need to become familiar with these different positions so you have more options for how you want to express your musical phrase. Here's another example of the same notes played two different ways [Ex. 10]. The second way of playing the notes might not sound or feel as good, but you should at least know how to do it.

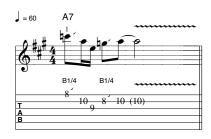
The other thing I've found to be helpful as an improviser is to think like a vocalist or like a singer. Singers have a specific melody that they're going to interpret. You, as a guitar player and improviser, get to make up the song while you're playing it, but if you can keep in mind that you're a singer telling a story, it will at least remind you not to play all this stuff [plays fast, un-singable, scale pattern]. Stuff like that really doesn't mean anything, because a singer would never think of singing it. They would concentrate on the lyric and the melody that they're trying to get across.

Lastly, think about how to structure your solo. Again, thinking like a singer can help you develop the melody you are improvising, so start simply, like a vocal song would. Leave space between your lines so that if your lines were lyrical phrases, the listener would have time to digest the words. Tell your story.

Ex. 8



Ex. 9



Ex. 10



Ex. 11



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LOCKED IN THE FUNK

Let's get a little funkier now. When you're playing the blues and it's got a funk groove to it, you, as the rhythm guitar player, are probably going to come up with some sort of muted part with a few accents. A couple of key things to remember: Your muted part can't conflict note-wise with the bass player, and should bounce off of and fit between the bass part, so that you and the bass player become two guys playing one bigger, unified part.

This jam [Ex. 11] started with a onechord vamp in C, with just the bass line happening [as notated]. I'd probably start off with a muted sound, created by resting my picking-hand palm on the strings. (Sometimes the deader you make the string, the better it feels.) Notice that the tonality is not C major or C minor, it's just C. I'm not going to commit a major

3 against that C riff—because that would make it too pretty—or a minor 3, as that would make the song sound minor. The notes I can use are the root, the 6, and the 5, as none of those will commit to a tonality.

When I start jamming with some guys and am creating a part like this on the fly, I try to organize my part. The way I start and this has always worked for me-is very simply. I give it space, space, space,

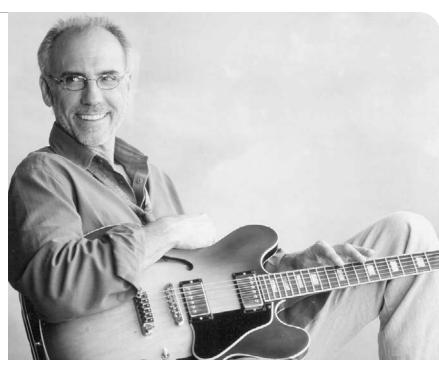


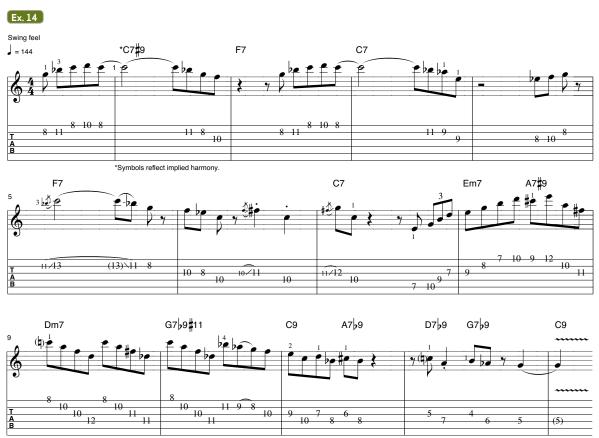
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because I don't know what else is going to be happening in the music. Maybe there's a clavinet player or a percussionist on the track. And as it develops, I'll just add to my little motif. We know the bass part is working-it's carrying the weight. So I start simple and leave space to see if anyone else is doing something. If they don't jump in, I'll play it again. Later, maybe I'll add a spiky little interval like this thing you hear a lot from funk players [strikes A (second string, 10th fret) and E, (first string, 11th fret) simultaneously].

MINOR MATTERS

Let's do something different. Let's play a blues in B minor. But rather than put down a rhythm guitar track and then play lead over it, I'm going combine the two tasks. I'm going to do a chord solo for you [Ex. 12]. What I want you to





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pick up on most of all is that there is a real melody here. It's just like if I was playing single-note blues licks, only they're harmonized. It's not just a bunch of chords. There's always melodic content.

ALL JAZZED UP

What I'm going to do now for you is play the rhythm part to blues with jazzier changes. I'll start very simply-perhaps I'll start off the first chorus with a #9 chord, so the soloist has some room to make a statement. And after that first chorus, my comping part is going to get a little busier, because I want to help perpetuate the solo and give it more energy. I'll be using, more altered chords, etc. [Ex. 13].

Now, I'm going to solo off these jazz/blues changes, and obviously, I'm going to be listening the chordal part, because I want ideas fed to me as a soloist. I'll probably do the typical Larry thing and start pretty simple, and just be listening. Hopefully, I'll get a little help from the comp track to help me develop the solo so it's more interesting. I'll be listening for altered chords, any kind of "Rhythm" changes [I-VI-II-V turnarounds in the style Gershwin's famous "I Got Rhythm" progression]. Now let's dig in to that and see what happens [Ex. 14].

BLUE MEANIES

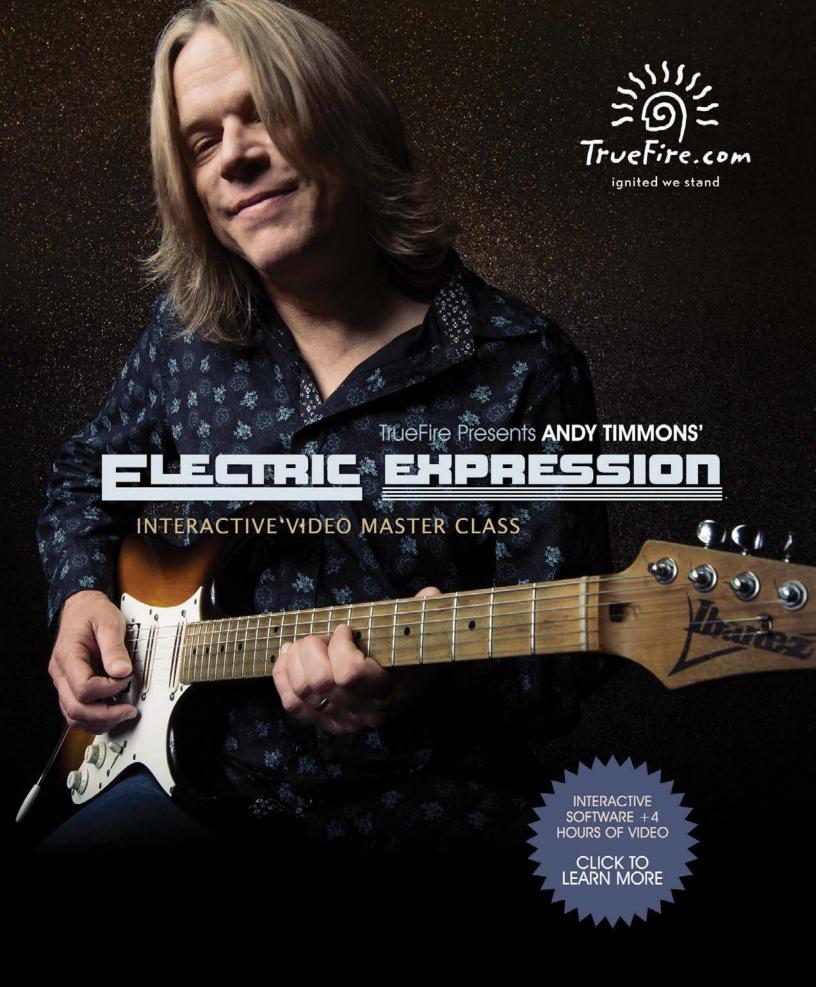
Range is very important when you're playing your solos. If somebody's comping along for you and they're in the midrange playing on the third or fourth string in the middle of the fretboard, you might want to start your solo in a higher range, so that now both parts can be heard clearly and they're not conflicting at all.

Again, the most important thing for me is always to try and make a musical statement. Even if I'm playing the blues and I'm excited or I'm passionate about it, I ask myself how important can I make what I'm playing? So, always try to get in the habit of saying to yourself, "Do I mean this? Is this something I really want someone to hear? Or am I just playing these licks because I know how to play these licks?" Don't do the latter. Instead, make your statement.

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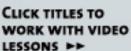
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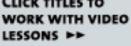
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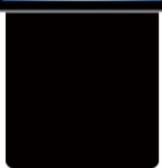
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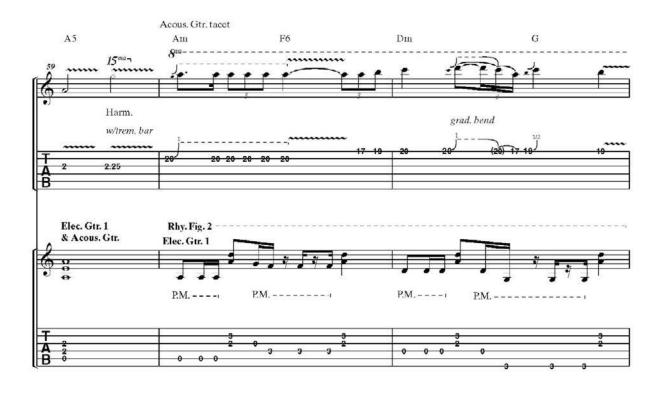


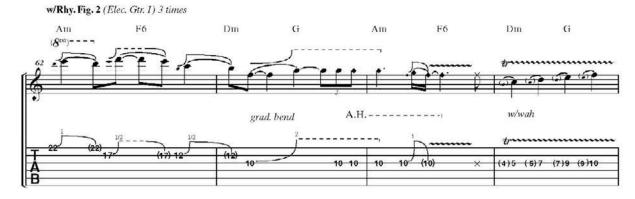


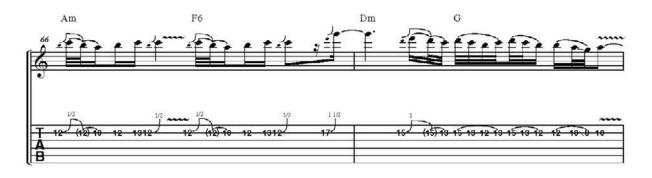
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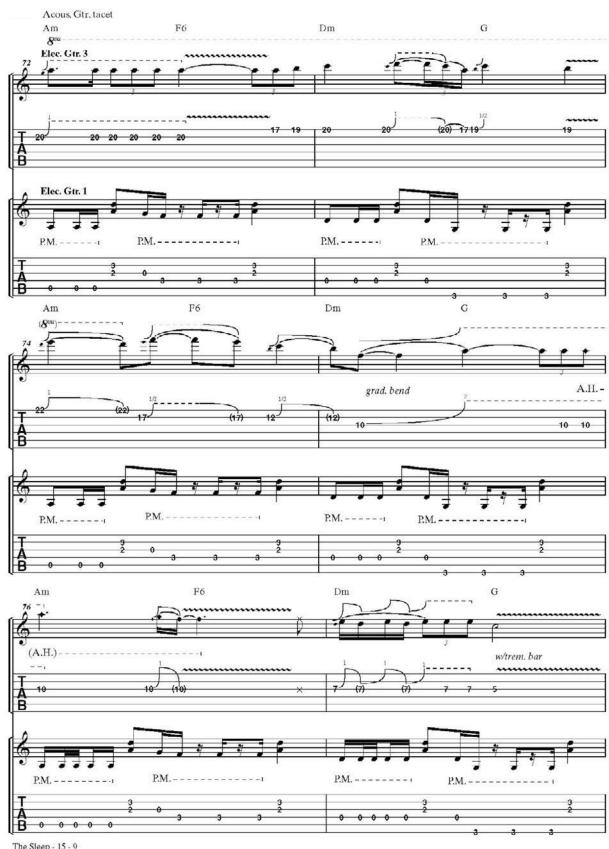




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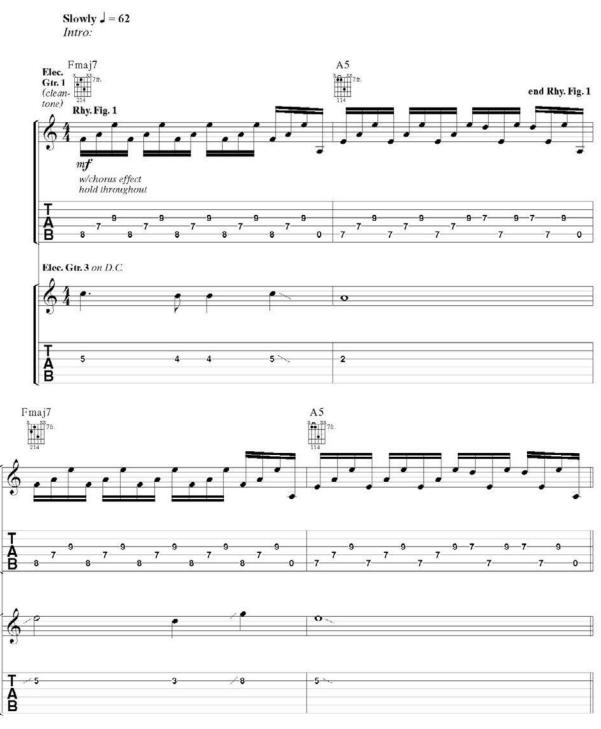
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seether



Driven Under - 5 - 2



Driven Under - 5 - 3

Then she told me

she had a

gun._

like__ she'd used_

It sound - ed



Driven Under - 5 - 4



Verse 3: I guess you know I'm faking When I tell you I love you. Guess you know that I am blind To everything you say and do. Must be something on my mind. There's nothing left for me to hide. Do you know I'm faking? (To Chorus:)

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